

National Assembly for Wales
Environment and Sustainability Committee
NRW 2015 – 74
Natural Resources Wales – Annual Scrutiny 2015
Response from Jamie Harries

Dear Sirs

I am one of the two full time river keepers on the River Towy. I deal with NRW staff on a regular basis in connection with fishing, water quality, pollution and poaching.

NRW have some excellent staff, I just wish they had more. They are under funded by Welsh Government and as a result are not able to undertake the enforcement action which they need to take. There is no point in having all the laws that apply to rivers if the means to enforce them do not exist.

The Welsh Government/NRW consultation on river basin management plans which also closes today is an example of this. Despite the water quality in the River Towy which in many parts is moderate or poor (and see my comments below), the management plan suggests taking less action in the future not more.

As farming in the Towy Valley becomes more and more intensive so more pollution enters the river from things like the application of slurry. There is no doubt that for much of the summer the water quality of the section of the river which I look after does not comply with the law. Yet there is no enforcement action to prevent this.

A significant part of NRW's funding comes from rod licence sales yet these are seldom if ever inspected.

I could go on.

If more funding cannot be made available then much more thought needs to be given to how more of the existing funding can be spent in the field.

Yours sincerely

Jamie Harries